Afghan Disabled Society

Mission Report

May 15-16, 1997

Gardiz, Patkia, Province, Afghanistan

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INTRODUCTION

Afghan Disabled Society (ADS) has been working in Paktia Province of Afghanistan since November 1994. The activities consisted of survey of disabled people, integration of disabled people to education, vocational training in tailoring, leather bag making, footwear making, referral, counseling of disabled people to services, advocacy, awareness, training of village workers, district, provincial advocates and loans to disabled people for the establishment of self-sustainable business and income creation scheme by the disabled people in communities.

Since we have expertise and investment in these fields and are also committed to rendering necessary services to the disabled population in a sustainable manner, ADS decided to undertake an assessment mission to Gardiz, Capitol of Paktia Province. The purpose of this mission was to assess the services currently available and to explore the possibility of extending such services to other districts in Paktia Province. This report covers all aspects of the life of disabled people affected negatively due to the lack of needed services and facilities.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Public and Commercial Buildings

Almost all of the governmental and commercial buildings have suffered significant damage and many are totally destroyed as a result of the last 20 years of imposed war. No new public buildings have been built during the last 20 years. There are no provisions for accessibility for the mobility impaired and physically disabled Afghans in any public or commercial buildings.

Public Latrine

There are not any public latrines and bath facilities accessible for disabled people. This has a profound affect on limiting the movement of disabled people. The lack of accessible Latrines is an invitation to urinary infection, bladder, kidney, and other related diseases which affect disabled people. There is no information about the affect of this on disabled people but it is a fact that people with severe mobility impairments are likely to acquire these diseases due to the unavailability of accessible latrines and baths especially during travelling. This limits the mobility of disabled people who become dependent and home-bound which forces them to rely on their already overburdened families who are often unable to help them.

B. PHYSIOTHERAPY

There are no physiotherapy services available in Gardiz and rest of the Paktia province. ADS has been serving as referral for physiotherapy to Kabul and Khost but due to the

poor economic conditions of those in need they have been unable to afford the travel related expenses. As a result those referred have been unable to make use of these services which could have a significant positive impact on the reduction of their disabilities in both short and long terms.

C. PROTHESIS AND ORTHOSES

There are not any prothesis and orthoses services in Paktia province including Paktika. Thus the already poor disabled people must travel to Kabul for orthosis and or prothesis which often prevents them from making use of these services. This has a negative impact on the productivity of disabled people.

D. EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

Income generation services

There are no any income creation support services for disabled people. However during 1995 ADS gave loans to 27 disabled persons but unfortunately funding could not be secured for 1996. This was an impediment to the enlargement of the program but the project continued on a self-help basis. ADS could again begin providing loans with a minimum contribution of US$4,000. This would allow the establishment of sustainable businesses for disabled people. These funds would be used for the establishment of a revolving fund to support disabled people in the following trades:

2. Shopkeeping,
3. Vegetable gardening
4. Poultry
5. Animal Husbandry
6. And other self initiated business of disabled people.

Vocational training

ADS has provided vocational training in tailoring, footwear making, leather bag making for 30 disabled in each trade during 1994-1995. ADS could not continue providing vocational training courses for 1996 but has equipment and Training Centers in Khost and Gardiz cities with a network of village workers and district advocates in most districts of Paktia province. These centers have the capacity to provide training to 200 disabled persons per year. Now 25 new trainees will be trained in footwear production. In addition, 15 graduated trainees of the previous training program will soon receive an upgrade to their training in order to improve quality of footwear products which will boost its marketability and have a positive impact on future sustainbility of the programmes. ADS is considering establishing a structure to provide vocational training services structure for disabled people in Paktia, Khost and Paktika provinces 1997-2000.

ADS has the capacity to provide training in the following trades in a more cost-effective manner:

1.	Tailoring	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	7,322
2.	Embroidery	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	7,322
3.	Carpet weaving	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	8,600
4.	Gilm weaving	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	6,350
5.	Soap making	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	7,800
6.	Leather bag making	20 person per 8 months cycle US$	7,322
		Total	**42,466**

E) TRANSPORTATION

At this moment accessible taxis or buses are not available. ADS intends to explore the possibility of modifying vehicles to make them accessible to disabled people in close consultation with disabled people who would use such a service.

F) EDUCATION

Education opportunities are severely lacking for disabled people in the province, in part because of a lack of teachers trained to deal with various disabilities. ADS is exploring the establishment of a teacher training program to provide teachers with specialized skills in sign languages and deaf education, braille and blind education, mental retardation and learning disabilities and the education of the physically disabled. Current estimates indicate that such a program could be operated for a cost of about US$4,000 for one academic year.

G) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

There is a great need for the systemic strengthening of ADS management capacity. We have established service structures which need consolidation and expansion, in order to, make it an integrated Community Based Rehabilitation service. In order to achieve this we must further train rehabilitation workers, physiotherapists, special education teachers, village workers or community volunteers and disabled people rights advocates. This will help to ensure the full and equal participation of disabled people in the mainstream of the society in Paktia province of Afghanistan.

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